PASTORAL LIFE

A PUBLICATION FOR PRIESTS

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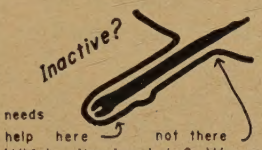

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PASTORAL LIFE

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Bible Studies And Our Schools

WILLIAM L. NEWTON, P.A.

Since the *Providentissimus Deus* of Leo XIII (1893) the Holy See has had more to say on the subject of the Scriptures than in all the preceding centuries of our era. This is a rather obvious indication that the subject has some importance, and that in our time especially there exists good reason for giving it this attention. Looked into a little more closely all the papal documents of this series reveal their common practical objective: the diligent, thorough and secure study of the Scriptures in order to make them more intelligible, more available, more fruitful for God's children, for whom they were ultimately intended. From the abundance of this official literature one might arrive at the conclusion that if there is an aspect of our Religion courses that has more than any other engaged the attention of the Holy See it is the study of the Bible. Most of the direction given the scholar is intended, it is true, for those advanced in the biblical sciences, for the professional in the field. Yet it must eventually reach over to the subject itself, on whatever level it may be studied.

This should be sufficient reason for raising some thoughts on the teaching of the Bible in our schools with those who have the primary responsibility, the priests who are in charge of schools.

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There is no objection to others listening in; rather they particularly are invited to do so who have the drawing up and directing of our curricula in hand. If any further excuse were needed it might be found in the nature and dignity of the Scriptures: with such a book within our reach, are we giving it the attention it merits in our teaching effort? We lack neither encouragement nor guidance on the part of the Church. Experience with the low state of biblical knowledge among our people would seem to answer the question in the negative.

GUIDANCE OF THE CHURCH

First let us deal with this guidance. If we restrict ourselves, as is the present intention, to the subject as it is taught in the grades of our elementary schools, or even in the years of our secondary schools, we can draw, particularly from the three great encyclicals on the Scriptures, an outline of what is expected from the studies we devote to the Bible. From this we should expect to find our usual concept of "Bible History" somewhat enlarged.

In the very first place, The Church wants us to know something about the Bible itself: especially its divine origin, with its dignity and authority, and also its human development. This implies something in the way of a general introduction, limited of course to the capacity of the pupils, yet altogether possible for any group. It should not be too difficult to stimulate in any class the respect and admiration due this greatest of all books. That God speaks to

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us in and through it, and "with a thousand tongues," is the conviction towards which we should strive.

Secondly, it is to be admitted that the encyclicals are orientated towards the highest standard of biblical studies, and address themselves to the sciences that are involved. Still they suppose that almost any approach to such studies, whatever the level, must be taken seriously. Children cannot be expected to engage in research; and yet even they are to be taught that the Bible is something more than a collection of interesting stories, that it is a book to be read with reflection, that some effort is required in the search for its meaning. The immediate significance of this is that it calls for a definite program of study devoted to the Bible in our courses. We cannot anticipate that a summary treatment of either Testament, and much less a use of the Bible as a story book, will develop in our children the attitude towards the Scriptures they *should* have. In brief, the message of the encyclicals for our school is that the Bible must be at least ranked with other branches as an object of study.

A third inference from these documents merits special remark: the reason for our study of the Bible is far higher than that which underlies any other subject in the curriculum. This follows from the nature of the Bible, from the fact that it is a part of our course in Religion, that it aims at equipping us for citizenship in an order well above the natural. The popes never tire using the ancient description of the Bible as a letter sent us by our heavenly Father, a message to us who are far away from Him in a strange land, a guide to bring us back safely to Him. In short, it is a most efficient instrument in the teaching of Religion, a direct contact with our greatest source of revelation, in a very true sense a meeting between God and the pupil.

A final point is made in all this official guidance of biblical studies that well might be singled out as the ultimate objective of our school efforts. It is the development in the children of such a personal devotion to the Bible that will lead to consistent private reading of it. St. Jerome's words are often quoted: "To be ignorant of the Scriptures is to be ignorant of Christ." This means at least that one of the ways of growing in sincere Christian life is through the devout and attentive reading of the Scriptures. This principle, above all, places special demands upon our teaching methods. They have not proved efficient if they fall short of this purpose.

Still other assistance might be found in the encyclicals for determining what a good course on the Bible should be. But the principles stated here will be sufficient to indicate the need of revising our outlook, of giving serious thought to the question of whether we are really teaching the Scriptures in our schools. An immediate reason for asking ourselves the question is found in our apparent failure to have achieved these objectives through our present efforts.

GENERAL STATE OF BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE VERY LOW

The general state of biblical knowledge, or of direct interest in it, is very low. This is too evident in actual experience to require demonstration. The statement is made in an absolute sense, and not merely by comparison with Bible interest among non-Catholics. It is not altogether certain today that the average Protestant is much better off than the Catholic in this respect. He is much worse off, of course, in that when he does read his Bible he relies on a most fallible interpeter. The fact remains evident that there does not exist among us the conviction that the Scriptures are a source of spiritual help, that the Book is one that should be taken in hand frequently and be read as a communication from God intended for us.

Our thought at this writing is primarily to indicate what the encyclicals require of us in the way of teaching the Bible. It is not to probe into our current attitudes and methods. And yet, in the light of the few principles indicated here, we might glance at the principal faults that are responsible for so notable a failure, or better, at the improvements necessary to carry us closer to our high objective.

In the very first place, thought must be given to a more thorough preparation of the teachers, a type of training that will first realize in them what we are hoping to realize in our pupils. Here we have in mind the teachers who for the most part are entrusted with the handling of this subject. It is a rare individual that has the equipment in this branch that she has in almost any other. It is a truism that she can communicate only what she has herself: *Qui non ardet non incendit.* Further, one cannot approach Bible study with a reluctance born of a consciousness of incompetence.

Then generally our approach to the subject can be elevated. We must not regard the Bible as merely a concatenation of stories; nor can we study it as we might any history. Its stories might be most captivating; they might also convey some very profound moral lessons; it might give us the history of the Israelites, and even the life of Christ. But in none of these, if they are made the aims of our teaching, are we moving towards our real objective.

Least of all are we on the road towards those objectives if we accept the Bible as a kind of little sister to the Catechism. This is a peculiar inversion of the right order of things. Together with it there goes often enough a fatal lack of appreciation for the Bible as a means of teaching Religion. As already observed, the Scriptures are a divine communication, not merely a collection of religious books. When we study or read the Bible it is God who is speaking to us. If we could only inculcate that lesson not only should we be moving in the right direction, but all religious knowledge would profit by it.

The great encyclicals on the Scriptures, and especially that of Pius XII, the *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943), have had one very heartening effect: they have stimulated not only Catholic scholarship of a high standard, but they have brought about an abundance of literature from Catholic sources on the subject. It is safe to say that we have never been as blessed in this respect as we are now. This makes us yearn all the more for the time when our schools will be similarly influenced by Rome's encouragement and measure up to the serious responsibility they have of restoring God's inspired letter to His children.

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING PROPERLY

It is of prime importance that, if we are to teach the Bible properly, we go thoroughly over our objectives and methods. But even with this, the proper teaching of the Bible will not be found the simplest task in pedagogy. And today it has been made perhaps the more difficult by the serious way in which modern biblical sciences have modified our traditional interpretations. Granting, then, that we must first look to our weapons, there rises another question of moment: how are we to teach the subject in view of these recent exegetical developments? There is little doubt that we know more about the Scriptures today than ever before. In addition,

much of our current information enlarges upon and often alters what we have regarded as traditional. And it is exactly here that we confront the problem: what are we to teach, and how are we to teach it?

It might help if we keep in mind the circumstances that have led to this situation. The immediate impulse might well be attributed to the *Divino afflante Spiritu* of Pope Pius XII. But beyond that progressive encyclical there stretches back for a couple of generations the amazing development of those sciences which find application to the Bible, and the inevitable tendency to view the data in the Scriptures in their light. The function of the encyclical was first of all to recognize that most of these sciences had reached a stage in which many of their conclusions might be accepted as secure, and then to encourage Catholic scholars to search out the fuller meaning of the sacred text with the aid of these sciences.

The research involved followed along the lines of textual, literary and historical criticism. Catholics had been active in all these fields, and had admitted them to their interpretations of the Scriptures long before; but there remained a kind of hesitation that prevented a full expression of their views. Now the Holy Father, interested in the attainment of the *scripturae veritas*, not only removed such restrictions but urged our scholars on. Most Catholic authors since then have responded to this urging, and what they write, however advanced it might seem, remains within the principles enunciated by the Church. Some few authors went a little beyond the prescribed limits of the certain results of these sciences and had to be warned. Some others, even of a scholarly inclination, preferred to hold to the earlier and more conservative position.

Parenthetically it might be remarked that these two schools of Catholic interpretation still exist, and that a clear distinction has yet to be marked between what is still in the speculative, the research state, and what is definitely assured. This only adds to our current problem. Opinions vary on some rather fundamental questions. Further, some authors are too anxious to leap into print with their views, failing to indicate that they are not as yet universally adopted. We are, in consequence, in a rather fluid state condition relative to many a biblical story, and this only increases the problem of the teacher.

But out of the situation some certainties appear. The first of these is that once we have launched upon this search for the

original and more accurate sense of the Scriptures there is no turning back. And there should be none. Two good reasons come to mind. First, with the help of this legitimate criticism we are beginning to recognize just what the hagiographers intended conveying to us. We are not dependent upon an uncertain text interpreted with faulty principles. And then, above all, much of the literalness which actually obscured the meaning will have been cleared away, and we shall find ourselves confronting the divine message as God directed it to us. In brief, the program should bring us to a fuller comprehension of the letter sent us by our heavenly Father. With this assurance we should be ready to face the difficulties created by the situation, knowing that, however arduous, they are leading us towards a more accurate teaching of the truth.

THE APOSTLES CREED PRINCIPAL GUIDE

In view of all this, certain rather general principles might come at once to mind. First of all, in none of this progress in biblical interpretation is there any question of a modification of our doctrines of faith. The Apostles Creed is still our principal guide. As long as we remain within the implications of this *symbolum fidei* we are safe dogmatically. But then the very sensible principle should be followed: that we teach just what the Bible says, not in the letter, but according to the intention of the author. If this method is pursued the pupil will not have to be untaught what he has erroneously learned. For instance, he cannot be taught the early chapters of Genesis in the same way that he is taught the story of the kings of Juda and Israel; no more than he can read the parables of the New Testament in the same way that he studies the events of the passion of Our Lord. In other words, the lessons presented to the pupil must follow the real sense of the Scriptures, that sense which has been discovered with the help of the established principles of recent biblical scientific research.

There is another general principle which follows from this: the teacher now more than ever must be carefully prepared for the teaching of this highly important branch of religious knowledge. He must have some acquaintance with the various types of criticism that are now altering our traditional views. Textual criticism need not detain him, as long, however, as he is employing one of the recent versions, and one that is based directly on the original text.

He must, on the other hand, have some knowledge of the various literary genera found in the Bible, he must be capable of distinguishing between historical fact and pious illustration (under the guidance of recognized authority), and he must be able to expound these to the pupils. At times he may be obliged to resort to an expression like, "This is what the Bible means . . ." But even this is better than leaving a false impression. And finally, he must know what is meant by "Historical Criticism." The application here will most likely be above the capacity of the children, thus throwing the teacher back upon a more thorough preparation of each lesson. The choice of a good text book is of the utmost importance in this respect.

Beyond these general remarks, mention may be made of some specific principles required by these recent developments in the subject. The very first of these is admitted by all: we must present just what the hagiographer intended. It might be only the children in our secondary schools who will be able to understand the sense of varying literary genera; yet it should not be too difficult to get the children of any grade to understand that terms are not always to be taken in their proper literal sense. The theory of this method of presentation is that the child need only grasp what is intended, the means used by the hagiographer can wait their exposition till a later time.

DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE WORD OF GOD

Historical criticism should offer less difficulty; in fact it can and should be of great help in the teaching of the Scriptures. The pupils should be made to appreciate that the books of the Bible were written many years ago, and in languages that expressed things differently than we might in English; that they emanated from a culture quite different from ours, that they are not to be read as we might read a modern book. It is an easy step to the next infererence: that the authors wrote each with a religious thesis in view, and that the fact, however real and exact they might be, were utilized to establish these purposes.

This leads to a final suggestion. It should never be lost to view that the Bible is a book that deals with God; that it has for us a religious message. This has two implications. Either Testament has a wider lesson in itself; and each individual passage must be

read and studied within that framework. For instance, if we regard the Old Testament as a progressive preparation for the Redemption, as it is, then each book, and the details it offers, must be read within that context. And it is particularly in this respect that modern biblical studies are of assistance, for even the critics outside the Church are today inclining more and more to the theological rather than the historical aspects of the Bible.

Another closing remark can be made, perhaps also in the nature of a helpful suggestion. Since one of the ultimates in our effort is to beget a personal attachment to the Bible, there is no reason why the pupils should not be allowed, or even encouraged, to read directly from the Bible the passages under discussion. This is altogether possible in the upper grades; and in the matter of the New Testament it is essential. Thus the child is permitted to see for himself the manner in which the story is presented in the Bible; and what is much more, he is brought in contact with the divine Author who is the most qualified of all teachers. Given this as the start of any Bible lesson, it would seem that the teacher has admirable opportunity of exposition, and a short cut to all the objectives ambitioned.

The importance of the subject we have here discussed should not be obscured by the brevity of its treatment. We are in most interesting times relative to the Scriptures. They are trying times when it comes to the teaching of the subject on lower levels. Still the challenge will have its reward both for the teacher and the pupil if the effort put forth is at all in proportion to the merit of the case.

SEPARATED

The first word which accompanies his first gesture on the road to the priesthood, on the day he is tonsured, is a spiritual testament: he renounces the world and chooses God: "Dominus pars haereditatis meae". The Lord will assure my inheritance to me. (Ps. 15, 5.) This is how he becomes one of the Clergy. "This word cleric," writes St. Jerome to Nepotian, "means both that he posesses God and that God becomes his owner."

Card. Suhard

The Year of Pastoral

Joseph H. O'Neill

I will not forget that face for a while – the face of a bored young priest. He was a religious sent away by his community to an institution of learning which was supposed to provide a "pastoral year" course. This is, as we know, that extra period now required by the Church in the formation of priests-religious. Well, the studies of this young cleric consisted of six lectures per week – three of catechetics, and three of homiletics – that was all. Time hung heavily on his hands.

I visited with him for a few minutes and felt very sorry about his situation. Here was one who was "on his own" and lacking the parochial experience necessary for really appreciating the opportunities afforded by such a year. A priest engaged in pastoral work would realize the great potential of such a period in order to "brush up" on those studies that would help him in his apostolic activities. However, I should like to deal with the question here of utilizing these "year" priests, as well a deacons in seminaries, with various endeavours at the parochial level. Considering the great lament about the shortage of priests, it seems to me that we are failing to employ obvious and eager helpers in the vineyard. There has been some talk about the possibility of married deacons, and the good that they could do for souls. But I suggest that we concentrate more on the matter of using our available clerics–priests–students and deacons.

Of course, the priest taking his "year" could help out in parish by saying Mass and giving Benediction, thereby giving him more experience in performing the Liturgy before congregations. But both priest and deacon could confer Solemn Baptism. This could, indeed, be of great help to pastors, especially in those parishes where there are a large number of Baptisms each Sunday. I realize

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Father O'Neill is from Beaverton, Ontario, Canada.

that the deacon is considered to be an extraordinary minister of this Sacrament. But note the words of the bishop in conferring the diaconate: "It behooveth a deacon to minister at the altar, to baptize and to preach."

Again, while lacking faculties, our two classes of clerics could read the Epistle and Gospel and make the announcements in parish churches, thereby developing that "at home" feeling in the pulpit, and helping to save the voices of the parish clergy for the deliverance of the Sunday sermon. The teaching of Catechism is another means of fruitful activity. And I should add here the idea of instructing inquirers. While there are a few institutions that may send their clerics out to teach Catechism, what about giving these lessons to converts? If not done with a class, could it not at least be tried with individuals? If laypeople are engaged in some inquiry centres in assisting with instructions, then why should our clerics not be considered for this work? And this is a task which takes up so much of the time of our parish priests.

The visiting of various societies of the parish, and the giving of little talks to the members is another way of developing parochial "know-how." Nor should I pass over the training of altar boys. Here we are utilizing young clerics who are 'well up" on their ceremonies. Think of how helpful they could be in this regard during Holy Week, when parish priests have the ceremonies to perform, as well as so many confessions to hear.

"PASTORAL BOOKWORK"

There is the matter of performing at least some of the "pastoral bookwork" and thereby learning and helping in this regard. Such occasions as Baptisms and marriages would provide opportunities along these lines. I should add here that an insight into the material necessities connected with a parish, along with problems of personnel — all such training helps in formulating a sound spiritual — temporal balance in dealing with parochial problems.

There is one work, however, that I should like to stress in particular, namely, the visitation of homes. Not infrequently one hears this remark of the faithful: "We never see our priests." By this is meant, of course, that they are not visited by their parish clergy. Now I do believe that many priests develop somewhat of a "guilt complex" in regard to this matter of getting out to call on

the people. But in so many instances are there not very valid excusing causes for being unable to perform this task?

I am informed that the clergy in parishes in England are out visiting homes with a great deal of regularity. But I am also told that these priests do not have to be attending a superabundance of meetings, as we do in America. And this, indeed, does make a difference when it is considered that one must not only attend the get-togethers of these societies, but often make extensive plans to insure their success.

But, even apart from these time-consuming organizations, there should be considered other demands on the clergy, which are so aggravated in view of the shortage of priests. There are the various parlour calls, involving such matters as instructions, marriage plans, family difficulties, and such like. The Liturgy must be well carried out, and there are all the problems connected with the proper training of the altar boys, as well as those of the choir. There are numerous confessions to be heard, as well as the care of the sick. Catechism must be taught, and sermons delivered, with the obvious preparation involved. Again, the pastor must assume the responsibility of keeping matters parochial in good order. Much of what he has to do might well be considered "trivia." But, if the palms have not been ordered in time, or the "stuck note" on the organ has not been prepared, then it is the pastor who must shoulder the responsibility.

Now I am not denying that in some cases, at least, there can be negligence and, perhaps, sheer laziness involved in this failing to visit homes. But what I am trying to indicate is the "varia" of pastoral work, which so frequently comes up to "interfere with" the making of regular calls on the people. No doubt, the situation would be improved if we could practise bi-location. But while awaiting this, it would seem to be more to the point to take advantage of an untapped source of help in this work — that of our clerics-in-training.

"RINGING DOORBELLS"?

Much publicity has been given in the last few years to the priest-worker movement. But we are painfully aware of the loss of Faith that has resulted in some cases, with a number of the clergy turning Communistic. Now I am not going to deal here with

the extremes involved in going from the soutane to the overalls. I have no doubt but that some would-be-apostles on this side of the Atlantic might have become intrigued at the notion of such an apostolate. But, in this matter of "ringing doorbells" we are dealing with a priestly activity that has been tried and not found "wanting." And I am very keen on pushing this form of apostolic endeavour, for it serves to bring a cleric "down to earth" very quickly when he begins to see various home conditions, rich and poor, and learns first-hand the problems that arise in homes.

There is any number of qualified priests who could give guidance in the technique of making calls — not only at the home of Catholics, but of others as well. It is possible to organize our clerics in such wise that both seculars and regulars could work hand-in-hand on such a project, either at a diocesan or individual parish level. This "common ground" plan for the care of souls could also serve to train both our diocesan and religious clergy on the importance of mutual cooperation — a matter that should be noted because it is so alien to the "isolated spirit" that sometimes manifests itself in clerics.

It is true that some pastors utilize the laity in the taking of a parish census. And such groups as the Legion of Mary are to be highly commended for their faithful and zealous calling on the people. And sometimes a lay person is in a better position than a priest to gain the confidence of a soul. But there is "something special" about the visit of one who wears the Roman collar. Most people, including non-Catholics, are pleased that one who is "set apart" should take the trouble to call on them. And in so many cases they are only too eager to discuss their various problems with a ready clerical visitor — one in whom they feel they can confide. I feel certain, then, that these student-clerics could do great good for souls by visiting homes. The problem-cases that they would uncover, could be looked after by the parish clergy.

YEAR FOR DEVELOPING A PASTORAL MENTALITY

This year, then, for developing a pastoral mentality is one of orientation. The student must be brought from the realm of the speculative into that of the practical. His course in scholastic theology has given him "balanced thinking" after the mind of Holy Mother the Church. Now he must be shown the "know-how" of caring for souls.

I am not unaware of the fact that some religious may stress certain parochial activities in this "year." So, for instance, a community that specializes in parish missions will place greater emphasis on the course in homiletics. But I believe that clerical-students should be given the chance to engage themselves in all the parish activities that I have mentioned, in order to "round them out" in the knowledge of how a parish operates.

This matter of learning how to deal with people is so important that Pope Pius XII dealt with it specifically in these words when he wrote the encyclical "Menti Nostrae:"

"If young men — especially those who have entered the seminary at a tender age — are educated in an environment too isolated from the world, they may, on leaving the seminary, find serious difficulty in their relations with either the ordinary people, or the educated laity, and it may happen that they adopt a misguided and false attitude toward the faithful, or that they consider their training in an unfavourable light. For this reason it is necessary that the students come in closer contact, gradually and prudently, with the judgments and tastes of the people in order that when they receive Holy Orders, and begin their ministry, they will not feel themselves disorientated — a thing that would not only be harmful to their souls, but also injure the efficacy of their work."

These words were written before the "pastoral year" was introduced into communities. But can they not be applied to both secular and religious clergy in regard to the proper orientation in the care of souls? So while our shortage of priests in America is lamentable, yet, I think that these clerics in question can help us, while learning about matters pastoral.

Meanwhile, I reflect on our bored young priest-student, sitting in on his six lectures per week, and being deprived of that practical experience that would help him to become "all things to all men."

OPEN-MINDNESS

We are sometimes inclined to forget that much good and salutary advice, particularly in matters social, economic, and administrative . . . can also come from those who sit in the pews.

Most Rev. William Smith

The Confessor and Vocations

E. F. Garesche, S.J.

The ever-increasing desire on the part of religious superiors and their communities for more and more vocations, to meet the multiplying requests for the services of more and more sisters, finds an echo in the heart of many priests. It is not only that the sisters are the most faithful, devoted and persevering of workers for the parish, nor that their economy and diligence and ability to get along with little make possible great and otherwise expensive undertakings. This is indeed an important consideration, but the prayers of the sisters, the merit of their lives, the good example they give of Christianity in action, make them doubly helpful in parish life.

By general consent, the priest is foremost among those who can help and encourage vocations, and not a few priests think they do all they can, in this direction. They preach on vocations from time to time, they spread vocational literature, they have talks on vocations by missionaries. What more can they do, to encourage vocations? After all, they say, their power though great — is limited. Young people, especially in our day, do not want to be urged or unduly influenced toward the priesthood or the religious life. To do too much is to defeat one's purpose. It creates a reaction that even may be disastrous for a vocation.

VARIOUS ATTITUDES

There are even some priests who say "I never sent a girl to a convent." By this they mean, perhaps, that they never influenced a girl to go to a convent when she was not already headed in that direction. Other priests say that they fear to urge too strongly this matter of vocations for fear that they would unduly influence the young people to take a step for which they might not be suited. Others still are a little vague about how they can do any more than

they are actually doing, given their own character and aptitudes, and the characters of the young people with whom they have to deal.

There is an impression that some priests who hear many confessions carry this reticence even into the confessional. Sometimes it is for a want of time, to speak of vocations to young people. There are so many waiting to go to confession, that they hasten to hear one after another, doing only what is necessary for the administration of the Sacrament.

Other confessors hardly think of bringing up the subject of vocations in the Confessional. They have so many other things in mind, they are asked about so many other subjects, that unless the penitent brings up the matter himself or herself, it is not even mentioned. Here again, the very urgency of the need, the importance to the individual and the Church, that not one true vocation shall have been given in vain, would urge that the priest make this one of his habitual solicitudes when he is hearing confessions, to find out and to help those who may need his counsel and encouragement in deciding and following a vocation.

Still other confessors question whether it is worth while, or at least very helpful to bring up the subject of vocations in the Confessional. How can one tell which of the many penitents should be questioned and advised on this very personal matter? Is there not danger of doing harm by giving a young man or woman who has no thought or aptitude for vocation, the impression that the confessor wants to influence him or her to this special calling? Indeed, how is one to introduce the subject at all without danger of offending? Some priests who have been impressed by the goodness and innocence of a penitent, and have inquired "have you thought that you might have a religious vocation?" have met with the reply "Father, I am married and have several children."

To answer these matters in order, there is really no doubt of the usefulness and even the advisability of speaking of vocations during confession. In this connection we may be excused for telling again the story of the religious superior who asked the head of a missionary band "Father, can you not send us some good vocations?" "I am only a rolling stone," he replied, "I visit a parish, give the mission instructions, hear the confessions and I am away to another place before I have time to get acquainted with people well enough to advise them on their vocations." "But you do hear many confes-

sions," said the superior, "sometimes even a few words to a young penitent have stirred a latent vocation which has borne great fruit for souls." "What you say is true," said the missionary. And thereafter he was able with a few words of counsel to help many vocations.

A MATTER THAT DESERVES MORE TIME

Not a few old people regretfully remember more leisurely days, when the priest had the time to give counsel and instruction in the Confessional. Now they say they feel hurried and worried at the speed at which they have to get out again to make way for the others in line. But would it not be well, considering the importance of guiding young people rightly, to have special times for hearing their confessions, when they could be sure of an opportunity to ask the question they wished to ask, and to receive the answers they need. After all, we can usually find time for matters which we consider of special importance. To give to the Church all the vocations God wishes, and to help young people to the way of life in which there is most happiness of life and service, surely deserves priority.

Some young people actually wait, according to their own testimony, until a priest in the confessional asks them about vocations. They conceive that to be a priest, or a religious, is such an exalted privilege, such a special gift of God, that it would be presumptuous on their part to bring up the question without being encouraged to do so. "I have thought for a long time about being a sister," said one such young person when this topic of vocation was brought up, "but I made up my mind that I would not take any step towards becoming a sister unless my confessor asked me about it, or proposed it to me. Who am I to aspire to such a life, unless the Church shows that She wants me! If a priest were to ask me about it, I would tell him frankly that nothing would make me more happy than to be a good, fervent sister."

It may indeed happen that some exceptional personalities may take umbrage at questions about their vocation, but we think they are the rare exception. The great majority of young people are appreciative of the interest that prompts the question, even though they themselves are not attracted to the priesthood or to the religious life. They thereafter meet such inquiries with frankness

and good will, especially if they are tactfully put, and seek only to bring out the beneficial truth, and not to urge the young person to take a step not desired. To be unduly fearful of bringing up this topic may prove an injustice, both to the young person in question and to the interests of the Church. Granted a tactful and kindly approach, no one need fear giving offense by asking about vocations in the Confessional.

As to the difficulties sometimes brought up "how is a person to know when to bring up this subject in confession, and when to be silent about it. After all, it is embarrassing to ask a married man or woman about vocation, and find that they are irrevocably committed to the holy state of matrimony." Experience will help in deciding when to speak and when to remain silent. Quite often it is clear enough that the person making the confession is unmarried, and may be suited to the religious or the priestly life. But if the confessor cannot make up his mind, he may ask a few questions, the answers to which would put him on the right track. In actual practice, experienced confessors do not err in choosing the person with whom to speak about vocations. Where the penitent has been going to one confessor for some time, it is all the easier to decide when and how to mention vocations.

Some young people prudently choose the confessor and go to him regularly so as to be more competently advised about their vocation. Sometimes they tell the confessor that this is why they are coming to him regularly, but it also happens that they wait for him to bring up the subject. They judge that with his superior experience and information, he does not need to be told that a girl is thinking about joining the Sisterhood or the boy is thinking of the priesthood or the religious life, but will bring up the subject himself and will give the proper advice without being asked. So they continue to go to confession to the same priest, until, finding that he does not bring up the subject or give them any counsel to help them to decide about it, they are greatly disappointed.

BEST WAY OF INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT

As to the best way of introducing the subject, each priest will find out for himself his most effective and tactful approach. Years ago an old priest, a veteran in the service of the Lord, described to me the confession which determined his destiny. He had drifted

into the idea of getting married, and had even begun to have an understanding with the girl whom he thought he would like to wed. But one day in the confessional, the priest suddenly said to him, "Have you ever thought of becoming a priest or a religious? It seems to me that from the way you talk and act in the confessional, that you may have a vocation." Deeply impressed, the young man left the confessional with a new and great idea dawning in his mind. Was it possible that he, ordinary and insignificant as he conceived himself to be, might aspire to serve God at the altar and in the ministry. After some thought and prayer he decided he would follow this best of all vocations, and he became a religious priest, laboring successfully for many years in the vineyards of the Lord.

Every one who has read the life of St. Philip Neri, that most human saint who for so many years lived as a holy layman in the Eternal City, and thought ever less and less of himself while others esteemed him more and more, will remember that it was only the virtual command of his confessor which induced him to become a priest. In the providence of God his great vocation was to be a confessor and director of souls, work which actually required the priestly character and power. But, of himself, he had no intention or desire, so far as we know, of ever aspiring to the priesthood. What a benefit his confessor conferred on the Church, and especially on the City of Rome, by urging him to that step! And what a great loss it would have been to souls if he had refrained from urging the good Philip to be ordained, whether from a fear of giving offense or from some mistaken idea that one should not interfere in such matters.

Even priests find it difficult to realize, sometimes, what a great power of encouragement they have over the young. Can they not remember how they themselves, in the formative years, were looking about for help and strength to make the great decision? As one generation after another arrives at the point when young folk have to choose their life's task, wise and kind encouragement is of immense importance in guiding and strengthening them to decide on the better way. We have often recalled that touching incident in the life of St. Camillus de Lellis, when he was wandering about, a discharged and wounded soldier, a gambler and quarreler — without any anchorage in life. He sought employment, so the story goes, at a monastery, when some building was in progress, and one of the monks, no doubt having pity on the young vagabond,

addressed some words of advice and exhortation to Camillus. Whatever the old monk said, his words had a marvellous effect on the life of the future saint. First he applied for entrance into a monastery, and he was received. But an old wound in his leg compelled him to leave. Several times he tried again. But failing still, he betook himself to Rome, and there, in the hospitals of the capital of Christendom, he first won fame and sanctity by his mercy to the sick and to the dying, and then founded the congregation that bears his name, to carry on his work through the years.

ENCOURAGEMENT APPRECIATED

Many other priests and religious have owed the fulfillment of their vocation, and sometimes their first thought about it, to the kindly words of priests. And as it is in the confessional that priests have the surest approach to these young souls, it is there that perhaps the greatest work for vocations is accomplished. The pious faithful realize this, and therefore they often advise young people, whom they see to be troubled or uncertain about their vocation, to go and consult the priest. He, they judge, with his knowledge and experience, his deep interest in the welfare of young folk, and the powerful influence derived from his priestly character, can best help them reasonably to decide about their holy vocation.

A further good reason for advising young people to choose a fixed confessor and seek his counsel about their vocation, is that when they seek to enter a seminary or a novitiate, the testimony of their confessor, as to their character and their qualifications, is of great weight with their superiors. In the St. Patrick's Club for Deferred Vocations, of which the present writer has been Spiritual Director for a number of years, the members are always advised thus to have a regular confessor, to whom they may become well-known, and to whom they can apply for recommendation when the time comes for entering the novitiate or the seminary. It is found to be a very great advantage for a young man to be able to present a letter from a priest who has known him intimately and can vouch for his character and fitness.

What we have been saying applies to the influence of the priest in the confessional, for the encouragement of both priestly and religious vocations. At the present time, when there is so much need for more religious priests and for more sisters, more brothers

and more diocesan priests, these reflections are particularly timely. What proportion of confessors in our country systematically and perseveringly use their power as confessors to clear the doubts and relieve the perplexities of young people as to their vocation, we do not know. But it seems clear that some priests are far ahead of others in the number of vocations which they help and encourage. For those confessors who, on reflection, find that they are not using their priestly power to the full to help vocations, the above considerations may at least prove the starting point for a greater effectiveness.

PRIESTLY PERFECTION

There is one quality which indisputably links man with God and makes him the pleasing and not unworthy "dispenser" of God's mercy, namely, sanctity of life and morals. If this, which is but the supereminent knowledge of Jesus Christ, be lacking in a priest, all things are lacking. For when not united with sanctity, that supply of carefully acquired learning, and that dexterity and skill in exercising it, even if they may be able to bestow some advantage either upon the Church or upon individuals, are often the lamentable cause of harm to their possessors. But how many wonderfully salutary works can he, though the humblest, attempt and accomplish for the "people of God," if he is graced and adorned by sanctity, the testimony of every age bear witness. Sanctity alone makes us what our divine vocation demands, namely, men crucified to the world and to whom the world is crucified; men walking in the newness of life, who, as Paul tells us, show themselves to be the ministers of God "in labors, in sleepless nights, in fastings; in innocence, in knowledge, in long-sufferings; in kindness . . ." (2 Cor., 6:5-7), who seek heavenly things alone and strive in every way to lead others to them.

St. Pius, in *Haerent animo*

The Priest and His Daily Meditation

WINFRID HERBST, S.D.S.

We are told that it is of the utmost importance that the priest make a daily meditation. Says St. Pius X in his Exhortation to the Catholic Clergy of August 4, 1908, the fiftieth year of his priesthood: "No priest can omit daily meditation without being guilty of serious negligence and to the detriment of his soul."

And why this? Because, as St. Augustine says, "He truly knows how to live rightly, who knows how to pray properly." Because, as St. Bernard assures us: "Meditation purifies the source, that is, the mind from which it springs. Then it governs the affections, directs the acts, corrects the excesses, regulates the conduct, brings purity and order into the life of him who practices it; finally it confers knowledge both of human and divine things." All that is so necessary in the heart of a priest, who knows that the divinest of all divine works is the salvation of souls, who is dedicated to the care of souls, and who when reflecting upon the people in his parish and in all the parishes of the world cannot but cry out: "Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people"

A MUST FOR EVERY PRIEST

Daily meditation, fifteen minutes (too short), half an hour, a full hour that is perhaps a holy hour in a twofold sense, is a must for every priest. "The priest," says St. Pius X, 'must be possessed of a certain facility of rising and dwelling on heavenly things, and so to order his life above human affairs that whatever he does in the fulfilment of his sacred office he may do according to God under the instinct and the guidance of faith. Now this habit of

mind and this, as it were, native union with God is greatly furthered and protected by the practice of daily meditation – a truth which must be so plain to every thoughtful man that it is unnecessary to dwell longer on it."

In that same Exhortation the sainted pontiff goes on to prove his assertion: "A confirmation, albeit a painful one, of all this is to be found in the lives of those priests who make light of meditation on divine things or have open antipathy for it. See those men in whom the sense of Christ, that most estimable gift, languishes: entirely occupied with earthly things, following vanity, babbling of trifles, performing their sacred duties negligently, coldly, perhaps even unworthily!"

NO TIME FOR MEDITATION?

But some say that they have no time. "They do not hide their poverty of soul but rather excuse it on the plea that they are entirely given up to the bustle of ministerial life for the manifold utility of others. But they are miserably deluded. For when priests not accustomed to converse with God, speak of Him to others, or give counsel on the Christian life, they are utterly distitute of the divine impulse and their preaching of the Gospel seems to be, as it were, half dead . . . So it is also with the other parts of the busy life – they are either altogether without result, or the results are fleeting through lack of that heavenly dew which 'the prayer of him that humbleth himself.' calls forth so abundantly."

It is in the same vein that Pius XII says in *Menti Nostrae* "We cannot abstain from expressing our pre-occupation and our anxiety for those who on account of the special circumstances of the moment have become so engulfed in the vortax of external activity that they neglect the chief duty of the priest, his own sanctification. We have already stated publicly in writing that those who presume that the world can be saved by what has been rightly called 'the heresy of action' must be made to exercise better judgment. The heresy of action is that activity which is not based upon the help of grace and does not make constant use of the means necessary to the pursuit of sanctity given us by Christ."

In this same Apostolic Exhortation to the Clergy of the Entire World Pope Pius XII likewise insists upon meditation: "Above all else, the Church exhorts us to the practice of meditation, which

raises the mind to the contemplation of heavenly things, which influences the heart with love of God and guides it on the straight path to Him. This meditation on sacred things offers the best means of preparation before and of thanksgiving after the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Meditation also disposes the soul to savor and to comprehend the beauties of the liturgy, and leads us to the contemplation of the eternal verities, and of the marvelous examples and teachings of the Gospel."

A SERIOUS OBLIGATION

There follows in that same *Menti Nostrae* this powerful passage: "We therefore consider it Our grave duty to exhort you in a special manner to the practice of daily meditation, a practice recommended also by Canon Law (can. 125, 2). For just as the desire for priestly perfection is nourished and strengthened by daily meditation, so its neglect is the source of distaste for spiritual things, through which piety is lessened and grows languid, and the impulse towards personal sanctification is not only weakened or ceases altogether, but the entire priestly ministry suffers great harm. It must therefore be stated without reservation that no other means has the unique efficacy of meditation, and that, as a consequence, its daily practice can in no wise be substituted for."

And Pope John XXIII, in his Encyclical Letter, *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia,* of August 1, 1959, speaking of the prayer life of St. John Vianney even in the midst of apostolic labors, says that in order to be successful in the ministry the lives of priests "must conform to the norms of faith that so imbued John Mary Vianney and enabled him to perform such wonderful works. 'Oh the wonderful faith of this priest' — one of his colleagues in the sacred ministry remarked —' it is great enough to enrich all the souls of the diocese!'

"This constant union with God is best achieved and preserved through the various practices of priestly piety; many of the more important of them, such as daily meditation, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the Rosary, careful examination of conscience, the Church, in her wise and provident regulations, has made obligatory for priests. As for the hours of the Office, priests have undertaken a serious obligation to the Church to recite them.

"The neglect of some of these rules may often be the reason

why certain churchmen are caught up in the whirl of external affairs, gradually lose their feeling for sacred things and finally fall into serious difficulties when they are shorn of all spiritual protection and enticed by the attractions of this earthly life. John Mary Vianney on the contrary 'never neglected his own salvation, no matter how busy he may have been with that of others.'"

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation, or mental prayer, consists of the preparation (realization of the presence of God, profound humility, petition for help), the body of the prayer (the consideration, the affections, the resolutions), and the conclusion (petition for help, act of thanksgiving, act of oblation).

There are many methods of mental prayer. The following enumeration will offer a variety for the daily meditation of the priest.

1. This is meditation properly so called. I take a certain holy consideration, heaven, for instance, and apply to it the powers of the soul, memory, understanding, and will. I seek to arrive at affections, at the love of God, and at some definite resolution.

2. I may take some mystery of the life of Jesus Christ or of the Blessed Virgin and ask myself: "Who are the persons? What are the words they speak? What are their actions?" My answers need not be complete. I again seek to arrive at union with God in love.

3. This is called the application of the senses. I direct the imagination and the senses of the body to some truth or to some mystery bearing on the life of Christ. I take the temptations of our Lord in the desert, for instance. With sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, I imagine all I can about those temptations.

EAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

4. This is a sort of examination of conscience in which devout desires, compunction, and resolutions of amendment are intermingled. I take the commandments, or the seven capital sins, or the powers of the soul, or the senses of the body, and try to see what sins I have committed and to arrive at corresponding affections and love of God in the sorrow of my heart.

5. This is the simplest and often the most fruitful. I take some vocal prayer, say one word or a group of words and meditate upon the same, going to the next only when the mind and heart seem to have utilized to the full the spiritual nourishment contained in each. I may take the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Salve Regina, or any prayers. I seek again to arrive at affections and the love of God.

6. This consists of saying a vocal prayer very slowly and thoughtfully, breath being taken between each word or phrase. For instance: "Soul of Christ, — sanctify me. — Body of Christ, — save me. " — etc. Anyone can pray like this. It is especially good for those who have acquired the habit of saying vocal prayers too rapidly.

SPIRITUAL READING AND PRAYER

7. This spiritual reading united to consideration. I take some book of piety and read with close attention a few lines of the same. As soon as a thought arrests my attention by responding to the needs of my soul and offering help in the form of light, counsel, admonition, or rebuke, I pause over it, I ponder it well, I let it sink into my heart, I let it make a lasting impression there. Perhaps I will read the passage again and again. Or, having extracted all the honey, so to speak, I will go on with my attentive reading, soon to pause again. This is also meditation, the spiritual reading method, it might be called, perhaps the method most commonly used. St. Teresa of Avila tells us that she applied it for many years with abundant fruit.

8. This is called the prayer of resignation. It consists in doing what the Son of God did in the Garden of Olives when He passed whole hours in repeating the self same words: "My Father, may Thy will, not mine be done." I surely have abundant occasions for this form of prayer. When things go hard that may be my prayer and meditation. It is a most profitable method.

9. This consists of the adoration of the divine perfections. If I cannot hold converse with God Himself, I can at least call upon His whole creation to praise and bless Him with me, as in the beautiful hymn of the three children in the furnace of fire at Babylon, *Benedicite*. "Let all the works of the Lord praise, bless, and glorify Him!"

10. This consists in making a pilgrimage in spirit to the holy places associated with the earthly life of Jesus Christ and in offering thanks for all the sufferings He endured for love of us. I go to Bethlehem, to Egypt, to Nazareth, to Jerusalem, to Calvary, etc. — or I may accompany our Lady or visit some shrine.

11. This consists in making acts and aspirations of love. Meditation strictly so called may be impossible for some souls, but surely every one can breathe forth a sigh of love. "My God, I love Thee!" Many different aspirations may be uttered according to the dispositions of the soul at the moment. And each single one will prove most acceptable to God, even if my heart seems to be wholly lacking in fervor or devotion. In this method may be included acts of faith, hope, thanksgiving, adoration, oblation, contrition, petition, conformity to the will of God, etc.

LORD TEACH ME HOW TO PRAY

12. If I cannot pray in any other way and cannot fix the attention of my wandering mind, I can at least make acts of humility and patience. "Dear Jesus, I cannot even pray!" I will humble myself in the midst of my coldness and aridity, my distractions and sufferings, and acknowledge that I am powerless apart from the grace of God, can do nothing without Him, am wholly ignorant, weak, and evil. I will be patient and admit that I deserve all punishment and suffering. In this I will remember that patience in prayer far outweighs all consolation in prayer, that if I do what I can God will give me what I desire. The prayer of the humble is so potent with God that it may truly be said that He is unable to withstand it.

Each one of the above methods may serve as mental prayer, as meditation. There are still others, no doubt, but these will be helpful in the performance of daily meditation.

"It must therefore be stated without reservation that no other means has the unique efficacy of meditation, and that, as a consequence, its daily practice can in no wise be substituted for."

Your School And Fire

Part II

George Kelley

In any type of building, good housekeeping is the key to safety. Mr. Jenkins, after thousands of inspections, says flatly that good housekeeping is 95 per cent of fire prevention.

The good housekeeping begins in the basement. Trash and waste paper must not be allowed to accumulate. Waste paper baskets should be emptied daily and the contents burned in an outdoor incinerator—not baled in the basement, and most of all, not piled in a basement bin. If it is necessary to empty the waste baskets during the day, the paper should not be dumped in a cart and allowed to stand somewhere in a hall until the end of the day. Even in elementary schools there are sneak smokers, and the first impulse of a child fearing detection is to get rid of the evidence. A cigarette or a match will be flung into the first thing at hand when authority approaches!

Paints, solvents and similar materials, if they are kept in the school at all, should be in the proper fireproof cabinets and in a special room. Preferably they should be kept in a separate maintenance building outside. A steel drum with a lid should be provided if it is necessary to keep oily or paint-soaked rags.

If ashes are kept in the building, they should be kept only in metal containers, safely away from walls or flammable material.

Basements and attics should be kept free of flammable material. It is especially important that hallways, even in the basement, not be cluttered with boxes, barrels or other objects that are not in use. If there is no storage room, it is better to get rid of unused articles, even if "they might be useful sometimes." True, they might—but meantime they may block a child in escaping from a fire, or block a fireman in fighting it.

"Pianos seem to cause a lot of trouble," Mr. Jenkins commented. "If a teacher doesn't want a piano in her room, it often is shoved into the hall or a passageway. Sometimes we find one pushed up against a fire door so that the door couldn't operate if it were needed."

The practice of oiling floors has pretty well died out, and the fire experts are happy about that. Waxing them, however, still holds hazards. It is possible that a spark from a waxing machine may ignite the wax. There was some suspicion that the black smoke which flooded Our Lady of the Angels School might have come from wax built up on the floors.

Care must be exercised in selecting paints. Underwriter Laboratories can supply sound information on fire-resistant or fireproof paints. These generally are water-base paints. Certain paints will flash when the temperature builds up, and spread explosive flame through the building. Heat will distill gases out of certain paints. Tung base paints generate a slight amount of heat in themselves when they are hardening.

The matter of good housekeeping calls for unending vigilance, preferably by the principal or the pastor. The janitor who resents such "prying around" the building might be reminded that even the pastor is subject to supervision. It is human to get careless, and without supervision such carelessness can lead to tragic results. Mr. Jenkins tells of entering a fine new public school to make an inspection, and finding two power mowers stored in the front hall of this fireproof building! Worse yet—the janitor was at the moment filling the gasoline tank of one of the mowers, inside the front door.

"The scuff of a heel 30 feet down the hall, the flip of a switch could have caused an explosion," Mr. Jenkins went on. "That janitor didn't realize that explosive gasoline fumes were flowing along the floor, probably for 30 or 40 feet from where he was working."

AUTOMATIC DOORS

Modern schools are equipped with self-closing doors. These doors, which were advocated earlier for installation in old buildings as well, have automatic door closers. There is a device on the closer which permits the door to stand open when desired, but

the device is fusible: if the air temperature rises to 140, the device melts and the door closes.

"The important thing here is to use nothing except this device to keep the doors open," Mr. Jenkins comments. "It's pretty silly to pay $200 for a safety door and then block its operation by putting a ten-cent wedge under it. If the automatic closer is allowed to function—and a wedge won't let it—it will check the spread of fire or smoke."

Panic hardware is required by code in most states. These panic locks consist of the familiar bars across doors which cause the door to unlock when there is pressure at any point on the bar. Yet even in new buildings, these doors sometimes are found chained and padlocked.

"There never is any excuse for chaining panic hardware," Mr. Jenkins said emphatically. "If there was need to install locks of that kind, there is need for them any time the building is occupied. And furthermore, these doors should be checked frequently to make sure they haven't begun to stick because of weather, paint or some other factor."

Window blinds, stage curtains, draperies, etc., can be made fireproof very easily and cheaply, by spraying them with a solution containing nine onces of borax and four onces of boric acid to a gallon of water. Most crepe paper now on the market is treated, but untreated crepe or other decorative paper should be treated before being used, especially in setting up shrines or May altars. Christmas trees and cotton used for Christmas decorations also should be treated—if it's necessary to have them in the school at all. The Most Rev. George Rehring, bishop of Toledo, Ohio, asked last Christmastide that no Christmas trees be used in schools, churches or institutions in his diocese, for fear of fire. Both of the Ohio state experts we have been quoting also believe the Christmas spirit can be expressed just as effectively and much more safely in some other way.

Decorations used at any time in the schools must be fireproof. Flammable material, especially if it is hung near lights, can cause panic and horrible injury. Many plastic materials meet this standard; some do not. Plastic decorations must be examined carefully as to their fireproof qualities when they are being bought.

Foil, if it is used, also should be placed carefully so that

there is no danger that it may cause a short circuit. This applies especially to foil "icicles." Mr. Jenkins has a dramatic demonstration of this point. He lays a piece of toy railroad track on some wispy cotton, such as is used very often to create winter scenes. An electric train is operating on the track, just as thousands of trains rashly circle thousands of Christmas trees every year. Mr. Jenkins drops one "icicle" across the track. The strip of foil creates a short circuit. This may cause an arc, which will ignite the cotton in a flash, or the foil itself may set fire to the cotton.

"The foil itself is flameproof," Mr. Jenkins explains, "but so is the heating element in your electric toaster. The foil will heat up from the short circuit, and if there's anything flammable nearby, you have trouble."

Candles present an unnecessary hazard in temporary shrines. Vigil lights should be used—and even then, care is necessary. Mr. McLaughlin recalls fighting a fire which started from a discarded match, dropped at a shrine.

Laboratories and shops need special watching. Good design calls for having them in separate sections of the school building, cut off by a fire wall and fire doors, so that if trouble does develop in them, the fire may be confined. Teachers need to make sure that experimental apparatus is taken down and that all shop appliances are turned off. An electric gluepot, for example, can become a fire hazard as well as being very likely to cause a stench. Sawdust should be disposed of carefully. This is true especially around sanding machines, for the dust from sanding a varnished surface builds up heat spontaneously, and must not be allowed to remain in the building.

FIRE DRILLS

Far more important than all the material factors in school safety, however, is the human factor. Aside from the janitor's good housekeeping, which can determine whether a fire starts and how it spreads, the organization and discipline of teachers and pupils may make the difference between having all the children escape safely from catastrophic fire, or having them lose their lives because of panic and indecision.

The fire drill is the first and most important specific element

in school safety. This will work well or poorly, depending upon the general disciplinary atmosphere of the school. Fortunately this is less of a problem in the parochial schools than in the public, where the ingrained sense of respect for priests and religious is not present to bolster the authority of teachers and principals.

Before a fire drill is held—in fact before a building is occupied—the responsible authority should map out orderly egress from each classroom and recreation area. Thoughtful planning will prevent congestion and the possible result of panic. A secondary plan should be worked out also for each area, to be followed in case the basic plan is blocked by smoke or flames. Teachers as well as pupils must be drilled in the program. It is especially important to hold drills early in the school year, so that all pupils may be trained in proper movement out of their new classrooms. New teachers, also, need to be familiarized with the procedure.

There should be no advance warning of a fire drill, but neither should there be any dramatics about it. It should be as serious and as methodical as a drill in Latin conjugation. Mr. Jenkins recalls one over-eager janitor, trying to co-operate with a fire drill, who created a smudge so that smoke might blow through the ventilators as the alarm rang.

"You can't teach them by scaring them to death," is Mr. Jenkins' comment on this procedure.

An essential element in a successful fire drill is making a tally. The roll of each class should be called when the children are outside, and if anyone is missing, a responsible adult should be assigned to canvass classrooms, toilets, libraries and other places where the missing youngsters may be. The fire drill doesn't do its job if it is not complete.

Reliance upon authority is not peculiar to nuns. One of the tragic factors in the Chicago fire apparently was the delay caused while a teacher looked for the principal, to report the fire to the proper authority. Mr. McLaughlin and Mr. Jenkins have had similar problems in public schools, in which a teacher or principal protested that a fire drill should not be held until the principal or superintendent, whoever was next in authority, had been notified! Nuns and lay teachers alike must be made fully aware that the proper authority to whom a fire should be re-

ported is the fire department, and the proper person to report it is the one who first learns about the fire. The principal or the pastor may be notified later. And the proper channel for this report is the quickest one at hand, whether it be a telephone or a fire box. Fire respects no rules, and it must be fought on the same basis.

FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Teachers also need instruction in using or directing the use of the school's own fire-fighting equipment. This is especially important in rural areas, or in schools remote from fire stations. The fire authorities will be more than willing to give demonstrations to the teachers on the easiest way of dragging fire extinguishers to the scene of trouble, and the proper use of them.

Even in "fireproof" buildings, extinguishers should be available at intervals of about 100 feet. In the past, it has been common to hang these on brackets, but it is difficult for a woman teacher to lift them down from these positions. A beter arrangement is to have them on low platforms, in recesses built for them, so that they will not be knocked over by pupils passing. And one more point about fire extinguishers: if they are not recharged every year, they are no more useful than they are decorative.

Many schools have fire hoses in cabinets or on racks strategically placed. This hose also needs annual inspection, for a leaky hose causes unnecessary water damage — and fails to deliver water at optimum pressure where it is most needed. If the hose has been used, it should be checked with especial care; the loops are likely to develop leaks.

As in health and in traffic safety, education is a potent weapon in behalf of fire safety. Except during Fire Prevention Week, when every harried program chairman of every club turns to the smoke-eaters, your fire chief captain will be glad to speak to your assembly, to your teachers or your parent-teacher group on fire prevention and on safety methods. They are interested deeply in avoiding the loss of life or property, and experience has taught them, as it has many others interested in public welfare, that they can reach many adults through their children, adults who otherwise would have no interest in their message and perhaps no means of getting it.

The rural pastor who has no organized fire protection in his area, and no fire department to turn to for advice, generally will find that his fire insurance underwriter will be happy to make arrangements for such help. He is a good man to consult, also, as to fire-resistant paints and fire-fighting equipment.

One example of undesirable equipment which sometimes has been sold in this way is a cheap substitute for automatic sprinklers, consisting of balls containing carbon tetrachloride. These are hung at the ceiling by means of a fusible material which melts when heat develops, allowing the balls to crash to the floor and release carbon tetrachloride. "Carbon tet" is effective in killing fire, but it isn't good for people! At best it may have an anaesthetic effect, slowing down thinking and reflexes at a critical time. At worst, it can produce phosgene, in the presence of heat—and phosgene needs no introduction to any man who went through gas attacks in World War I.

It is prudent for any pastor, urban or rural, to consult his fire underwriter occasionally. With numerous bills hanging overhead, pastors may yield to the temptation to renew their fire insurance as it was three years ago — and perhaps longer — without recognizing that construction costs have multiplied.

If all this sounds like "scare stuff," it is not so intended. The only purpose has been to present, with the support of experts, some of the hazards that escape the notice of busy pastors, and to offer practical remedies.

"It took the Collinwood fire to educate one generation about school fires," says Mr. McLaughlin. "I guess it took the Chicago fire to educate another one."

A LEADER

In these times of extraordinary upheavals in which unfortunately so many persons are indifferent, or bewildered, or misled, it is a necessity that the priest seek out and follow every way to approach, influence, strengthen, and convert them. Happily victories are neither difficult nor infrequent when the priest is really a man of God, filled with the love of God and zeal for His glory and for the salvation of souls.

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quid in casu?

WILLIAM F. ALLEN, J.C.D.

May we build the altar in our new church so that the celebrant will face the people?

On July 16, 1957, the Congregation of Rites issued an instruction to the effect that if there is only one altar in the church, it cannot be so constructed that the celebrant faces the people. It seems that this prescription was set down because someone had asked permission to remove the tabernacle from the altar which was so constructed that the celebrant faced the people. It was contended that the tabernacle hindered the view of the congregation. Furthermore the instruction stated that Mass must be celebrated "habitualiter" on the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved; and a *conopaeo,* a very full tabernacle veil must envelop the Holy of Holies. The main altar was indicated as the proper altar for the irremovable tabernacle.

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On what side of the church should we start the Way of the Cross.

There is no set rule, but custom has it as starting on the Gospel side.

May a marriage be consummated if the husband accomplishes the act in the state of drunkenness, not knowing what he is doing; or half asleep, so that the next day he has no recollection of the fact?

Yes, marriage may be thus consummated. The Holy Office Feb. 2, 1949 stated that the consummation of marriage required only the eternal fact of natural intercourse. It is true that this was a decision in a particular case and the decision was not published officially. However, it is an indication of what might well be the praxis of the Curia. It seems that the decision came apropos of a marriage case in which the husband never could perform the marriage act on his part despite many trials. One night he took an overdose of some stimulant which was not only physically effective, but also mentally, robbing him of the use of his reason. In this state, the husband consummated the marriage—performing the essentials in proper manner except that he was non-compos mentally. The Rota thought that the marriage was not consummated according to canonical theory, since it was not an actus humanus; it referred the case to the Sovereign Pontiff for a dispensation.

This was refused; the case was sent by the Pope to the Holy Office for consideration. The net result was the decree affirming that the marriage was consummated. It seems that such was always the common opinion of Canonists. Cf. *Monitor Ecclesiasticus*, 1957, p. 631.)

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Leopold, a policeman, has the duty imposed on him of checking and licensing houses of prostitution in a large city. This is done as a public health measure and it is not in virtue of a written law but of a custom in this area. Strangers often come to him in search of the location of these houses and he refuses them any information. Furthermore, he rejects many petitions for license each year on false grounds; he deliberately neglects the inspection of the licensed ones on the grounds that it is an occasion of sin for him and his subordinates. He is aware that abuses have crept in because of his attitude. Is Leopold faultless from a moral viewpoint?

Certainly we must admire Leopold's Christian sense of morality. We can absolutely say that in no sense of the term can he be numbered amongst formal cooperators in evil. This "white traffic" meets with his disgust and disapproval. He is to be congratulated in that he tries to turn victims away from such houses by refusing them any information as to their whereabouts. He has no obligation to furnish such information and it is Christian to protect the inquirer from sin. Can we say as much for his refusal to inspect and to license these havens? If the civil law permits the licensing of such places there must be serious reasons for such a procedure. It is said that in Europe legislators are moved to this by the consideration of keeping prostitutes in check, under supervision, and in specific areas for public protection and order and in a way to dissuade clients from doing such business: forced to go to certain areas known as suspect houses, some men and women will be held back from participating in it by human respect and fear of exposure. In the case of conscience under consideration it is noted that abuses have crept in because of Leopold's refusal to inspect and to license. We doubt that he should be commended for his indifference and for flaunting the civil law of which he is the guardian. It is his duty to carry out the law; his cooperation is remote and certainly material. The danger to the public good and order is serious and objective and proximate. He is bound to diminish it and if possible to ward it away. He should, therefore, inspect and license. He has important considerations which justify this intervention in evil on his part. Even though he might be placed in an occasion of sin he can overcome this easily by prayer, by vigilance and by the speedy and careful performance of his duty. Considerations of the commonweal would prevail over personal views and advantages or disadvantages,

particularly when the latter can be remedied or reduced to nil. Cf. Callan and McHugh, Moral Theology, vol. I, n. 1541. (This casus so foreign to us in the United States comes to us from the Union of South Africa.)

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This man is 31 *years of age. His wife is* 29. *They have been married ten years and have six children. Two years ago the medical doctor and a psychiatrist advised that the wife be sterilized, since her mental condition was so precarious that childbirth would result in a total mental breakdown. His wife was not able to submit to the operation so the husband had a vasectomy. Now he is very repentant and wishes to return to the sacraments. The doctor told him that he could be made fertile again by surgical reconstruction. He does not want to submit to the reconstruction. He fears for his wife if she should become pregnant again; rhythm does not work in his case. Notwithstanding all this, he is willing to submit to the operation if it means reinstatement in the Church. I consulted a Catholic surgeon here and he tells me that the chances of success in the male are* 25 *to* 50 *percent. I ask: must he submit to the operation now that he is repentant and wishes to return to the sacraments?*

We are agreed that the man in question may be forgiven his sins before he considers the operation aspect: the malice of his act has ceased with his contrition and, hence, the way for absolution is cleared. The effects of his sin are no longer per se within the command of his will; at least not to the extent that they hinder absolution, hic et nunc.

Once forgiven, should he undergo the operation? In general, moralists do require the operation if it is not an extraordinary means of procuring the end desired and if there is reasonable hope of success to it. For the male, does the operation fulfill these conditions?

Father Clifford, S.J., in "Marital Rights of the Sinfully Sterilized" (Theological Studies 1944, p. 157) writes, "what then is the prognosis in vasectomy? Far from hopeful; for remedial surgery has accomplished little in the way of restoring male fertility . . . as the operation calls for great technical skill . . . and the success of renewal of fertility is doubtful . . . there can be no basis for claiming a moral obligation to resort to it." One may say that such was the case in 1944—a good many years ago. There is a thesis from Catholic University, "The Matrimonial Impediment of Impotence: Occlusion of the Spermatic Ducts and Vaginismus" by Frattin, 1958. On p. 95 the author writes that of the 80 known operations of this kind on the male in the United States in recent years only 38 per cent were successful. On p. 93 he states that doctors know that in 41

percent of the cases the results were extremely doubtful. This brings the percentage of success down considerably. Dr. McCormack of the New York Tribunal seems to agree when he writes, "Minimam esse probabilitatem felicitatis in operatione remediali" p.96. Recently I attended a lecture on the subject by a good Catholic surgeon and he held that the operation was of extreme delicate nature and that he would not advise his patient to undergo it. Your own surgeon will only give a 25 to 50 per cent chance of success. This would indicate that the result was, of its nature, very doubtful.

With all that evidence before me, I would hesitate to impose the obligation of undergoing the operation on the penitent: it seems as if the operation is an extraordinary means and that its chance for success is meager.

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Last year we argued about the obligation of fast and abstinence on Oct. 31. With the vigil of All Saints suspressed is the same true of the fast and abstinence on that day?

Many authors concluded that with the suppression of the vigils all obligations attached to them disappeared too. In private replies to the U.S. hierarchy, the Sacred Congregation of the Council decreed that the *liturgical* aspect of the vigil was suppressed but not the *penitential* aspect and that the obligation of fast and abstinence still was obligatory. It added that the bishops had the power to dispense from that obligation in virtue of their faculties and that the suppression of the liturgical vigil gave them an added reason for so doing if they judged it prudent. Cf. Bouscaren, Canon Law Digest IV 1958, p. 356.

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Why may we take the regular ablutions when we binate and our second Mass is not less than three hours away? Is it because of the rule on liquids and alcoholics ones? Must we take the wine?

Some have raised this question and find the practice of the complete ablutions contrary to the word of the Sacram Comunionem. One dissenter claimed that we should have a new official decree to permit taking the full ablutions in between Masses when the second is not less than three hours away! The justification comes from an article written by Alfred Cardinal Ottaviani on the *Motu Proprio*. It appeared in the *Osservatore Romano* of March 23, 1957. The Cardinal is Pro-Secretary of the Holy Office and thus is eminently qualified as an authority. He writes 'the priest who will celebrate his second Mass not less than three hours after his first Mass not only may but ought to perform the ablutions with water and wine as prescribed by the rubrics'.

If a husband and wife are converts to the Catholic Faith, may they keep (but not use) as a remembrance, a Protestant Bible given them on their wedding day?

A Protestant Bible is ipso jure forbidden; this means that we cannot edit, read, retain one in our possession without due permission (Can. 1399). All are agreed that a person may retain it while awaiting the opportunity of seeking permission. It would be advisable that they seek permission to retain it from their Bishop. This permission will be all the easier to obtain since the Bible is to be held for sentimental reasons rather than for any religious attachment.

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Several years ago I discarded a couple of side altars and fitted the altar stones to other altars. The stone-cutter did away with some of the crosses, i.e. those on the corners. Are these stones still consecrated? If not what formula is to be used for the reconsecration?

A portable altar loses its consecration if it becomes cracked to a considerable degree or when it is split in two or a piece is broken off which contains one of the five crosses of the anointing: also when the sepulchrum is broken or when a tiny crack goes all the way down the center even if it does not touch the sepulchrum. (Wapelhorst, p. 15 Comp. Sacrae Liturgiae) Thus it would seem that the altar stone is no longer consecrated. Which form is to be used for the reconsecration? For the United States the Sacred Congregation has permitted Bishops to delegate priests for the consecrating of immovable and portable altars with the formula from the Pontificale Romanum. For portable altars the shorter form may be used and this resembles very closely the form published by the Sacred Congregation Sept. 9, 1920 cf. Acta XII, 450. (Woywood A Commentary, ed. 1943, p. 27).

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May I change the titular saint of any altar in my church?

The titular Saint of a fixed, immobile, consecrated altar cannot be changed without the permission of the Holy See. If the altar is immobile, or a quasi fixed, non-consecrated altar then the local Ordinary must give permission. (c. 1201 n. 3).

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At the Hanc Igitur should the priest extend his hands over the chalice as is generally done or over both the host and the chalice?

It is true that what is most generally done seems to be wrong: the rubric says "extendens manus suas *super oblata*" and that would seem to indicate that we should hold our clasped hands over both the host and the chalice.

Must a priest wash the purificators before they are sent to the laundry?

Canon 1306 n. 2 states that purificators, palls, corporals cannot be washed even by religious until they are first *abluta* by a cleric in major orders (unless in mission territory some privilege be granted to the contrary). The above must be rinsed by a cleric and this water must be placed in the sacrarium or in fire.

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When do we have more than one oration in a High *Mass?*

In dominicis I classis, in festis I classis, in feriis et vigiliis privilegiatis et insuper *in Missis* in cantu vel votivis solemnibus, *nulla* admittitur commemoratio.

In festis II classis, et in *caeteris dominicis una* tantum admittitur commemoratio. Tit. III De Commemorationibus.

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May the crucifix of the altar be placed on top of the tabernacle?

Yes. It may be placed on the tabernacle but never in front of the same. Similarly, it should not be placed on the throne reserved for the Blessed Sacrament; this throne, the Thabor, is conceived as a mobile affair to be placed on the altar only for benediction. (S. C. R. 4136 ad 2).

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Does the Missionary alone have the faculties granted to him in Can. 899 n. 3, or do all priests assigned to hear confessions during a novena, a mission or retreat preached by a missionary enjoy the same faculties?

It is true that commonly the words "missiones ad populum" are interpreted as meaning all spiritual exercises or retreats conducted in common for a group. It is solidly probable, too, that on these occasions all priests delegated to hear confessions of those attending the exercises have the faculties of Can. 899 of absolving the penitents from cases reserved to the Ordinary by himself. These cases include not only reserved sins but also censures edicted by the Ordinary as reserved to himself. (Cf. McCarthy: *Problems in Theology*, p. 246.)

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If exposition of the Blessed Sacrament follows immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion may the priest omit the usual prayers and blessing given to the communicants (outside Mass)?

No, it is of precept and for no reason may it be omitted according to approved authors.

THE DIVINE OFFICE AS WORK

We know that the monks like to call the Office the Opus Dei. Opus is a Latin word meaning work. We refer to a musical work as an opus. Opus has meaning in English as well as in Latin. Opus is not precisely labor. It is a work of skill, of artistry, an achievement.

There is a tendency on the part of us priests in the active ministry to get the Office out of the way so that we can get down to our work. Or, after we feel that the day's work is over, we take up the Office. Or, we intersperse the Office throughout the work day. We take the attitude that the Office is something apart from our work. Yet it is very definitely a part of our work.

We ought never to say the Office hurriedly, nervously, anxious to get to some piece of work. The Office itself is just as much our work as any other priestly duty we have. When we are saying our Office we are doing part of our work. It is work, opus, to be exact.

It would be good if we could understand the Office readily and drink deep of the rich wellsprings of Scripture and the Fathers. It is in America only the rare scholar who can do that, and even he may not find much unction in such draughts.

We had better not pine away our priestly lives wishfully for a vernacular Office to appear. Our work right now is with the Latin we have at present.

It makes the Office more palatable to approach it as a very real part of our work. It seems then a work to be done rather than a duty to be dispatched. We will be less restless in saying it, if we get down to saying it well, rather than just getting it said. Properly considered, nothing is more important than the praise and worship of God. Not only is the Office our work. We ought to prefer nothing to this Opus Dei.

CONVICTION

Making one's daily meditation is a matter of conviction. If you are convinced that it is necessary you will find time for it. If you think it a nice idea but admitting of omission, then you

will scarcely ever find time for it.

Really, what we priests ought to do is take for true what so many experts and authorities on the spiritual life have said about meditation. They make it a must.

We all find time to eat. We all find time for at least a few hours rest. We even find time for such bothersome things as shaving, and perhaps shining our shoes. In a sense these things are forced upon us by nature or convention. But meditation is even more important.

Even if we might be inclined to neglect our personal spiritual welfare, let us then look upon meditation as a way to help our people. If we are prayerful priests we will be of great usefulness for souls. Whatever we do as priests must be geared for the salvation of souls. That is our life's work. The many external things in which we get entangled are all supposedly for the welfare of our people. We are working for them.

Now it is a fact that we will do them more good if we are men of prayer than if we are merely men of activity. There is sufficient authority for that statement to omit detailed proofs. When we take time out for our daily meditation we are not hurting the people. We are helping them all the more. We certainly are not hurting ourselves either. We have everything to gain, nothing to lose.

Who wants to be a second-rate priest? Who wants to be an inefficient instrument in the work of saving souls? If we are convinced that the type of prayer engendered by our meditation will make us all the more efficient priests to save souls, then we will find time for it. It is good for us too.

JUST A JOB

A priest and an undertaker's assistant were having a conversation. The priest remarked that an undertaker ought to be a very holy man, for he is constantly occupied with death, must necessarily think of death every day. The young assistant remarked, "Not at all. Death means nothing to an undertaker. It's just a job. A body is brought in. They take it downstairs. A little embalming and a little cosmetics, and they bring the body upstairs. It's just a job."

Knowing human nature as we priests do we can well imagine how an undertaker could get callous in his work, and look upon it as just another job. We understand how that can be, because we know how we our-

selves can get used to even the holiest of works, and fall prey to routine.

Would it not be a tragic thing, though, if we began to take our priesthood as just a job, if we were no longer impressed by its tremendous significance. Would it not be regrettable if the people began to sense that we had lost all unction in our work, and if they began to remark that we were just doing a job?

Surely we have to be on constant guard lest we grow to be like the undertakers that the cynical young man was describing. We know from our observation that many undertakers show genuine sympathy, and that in spite of the routine and sameness of their work manage to treat the public with great courtesy and considerateness. Though this is but one of many funerals to them, they realize that this particular dead person is a father, or mother, or child to those who survive. And they act in accordance with this knowlege.

We priests, despite our familiarity with things divine must by meditation, and by sheer effort, make ourselves realize the greatness of our priestly work. Likewise, in our dealings with the people we must enter into their thoughts, feel with their sentiments, put ourselves in their place. This First Communion, wedding, this funeral, may be one in a long series of such events in our career. But it is a unique experience for the person or persons concerned. We must try to see it as they see it.

God grant that the works of our priesthood may never become just a job to be done. May each act of our priestly ministry be new, fresh, vital, and pregnant with spiritual significance. If our faith is strong it will be such Lord, strengthen my faith.

CONTRADICTION

We are consecrated beings. At the altar we are about an action that is infinitely holy. Holiness himself rests in our hands; holy angels hover in inseen adoration; the church itself is holy through consecration and blessing; the stone of sacrifce is likewise solemnly consecrated by the bishop. So is the chalice . . . What an utter contradiction it is if the soul of the priest is an unholy thing, dark with the stain of grievous sin, surrendered to the power of the prince of darkness.

Francis Ripley, in *Priest of Christ*

BOOK-REVIEW Selections

DICTIONARY OF SAINT THOMAS *by Roy J. Defarrari, Ph. D. St. Paul Publications,* 1118 *pp.* $10.00

This Latin-English dictionary is a welcome reference work for priests, theologians, educators, philosophers and librarians.

The only satisfactory way to study the philosophy and theology of Saint Thomas is through the medium of his own language and not exclusively or even predominantly through the language of translators and interpreters. A very note-worthy feature of this dictionary is that it contains every word that occurs in the Summa Theologica in all its meanings.

It is intended as a handy instrument for the rapid translation of the works of the Angelic Doctor, and in particular his Summa Theologica. The material for the dictionary has been taken from A LEXICON OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS by the same author and his associates. The characteristics of the Lexicon, so highly praised by critics, are naturally reflected in the Dictionary. This is truly a valuable addition to any priest's or seminarian's library shelf.

Wayne R. Tenney

CITADEL OF WISDOM, *by Robert J. O'Connell, S.J. Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, New York.* 114 *pp.* $3.00

The author tells us that he has written this booklet in belief that Mary, the Mother of Christ, "is our best guide to her Son." In this he is only reiterating the belief of the Church down down through the centuries, summed up in these words of Pope St. Pius X: ". . . no one can ever be a more competent guide and teacher for knowing Christ. (*Ad diem illum*) This same doctrine was expounded most forcefully by St. Louis De Montfort when he wrote that Mary is "the easy, short, perfect and secure way of attaining union withour Lord, in which union the perfection of a Christian consists." (*True Devotion, No.* 152) This book was written in the hope that: — through reflection upon the life of Mary during the hidden life of Christ;

through a better understanding of the intimate union between Christ and Mary, particularly in His voluntary dependance on her for thirty years, souls would learn to know and imitate Him Who is our Way, our Truth, and our Life.

—from the jacket

THE MASS IN MEDITATION, Vol. II, *by Theodore Schnitzler; translated by Msgr. Rudolph Kraus. B. Herder Book Co.* 317 *pp.* $4.50.

The second volume of Father Schnitzler's meditations, written primarily for seminarians and priests, intends to make the Mass more meaningful, fruitful and loved. The book is a balanced blending of history, theology, liturgy and moral applications on the rich subject of the Mass.

The first volume trats of the very heart of the Mass: the Canon and the Consecration. The present volume (the second) considers the parts of the Mass which precede and follow the Consecration. The entire two-volume work represents eleven years of study and teaching of the Mass. Father J. A. Jungmann, the renowed scholar in this field points out in his Foreword, the aim of this work, namely, the discovery that "behind the simple words of the Canon of the Mass, the entire spiritual world of the Christian early becomes alive: a great concept of God, a noble picture of Christ, the sight of the Church in its unity of the Church Triumphant and those still on their earthly pilgrimage, the monumental praying and seeking for God in an heroic age. Like the experienced archeologist, who out of a few fragments can assemble the entire building or picture from which they originate, so the author knows how, from the sparse words of the holy text, through which we hurry daily with all too speedy steps, to let the spiritual world of the great Fathers arise once more."

John Auricchio, S.S.P.

PRIEST OF CHRIST, *by the Very Rev. Francis J. Ripley. The Newman Press.* 197 *pp.* $3 95

This book contains a collection of sermons taken from conferences given to priests and seminarians by Father Ripley during the past fifteen years. In each selection a deep realization of the sublime dignity of the priestly vocation underlies the practical counsel given. This realization — that priests are "other Christs . . . set apart for the Lord . . . consecrated beings"

calls forth an exhortation to practice greater active charity and to work with ever greater zeal. Stress is laid on the importance of doing each duty well, no matter how minor, and of being constantly alert for opportunities to plant the seed of grace in souls.

The problems involved in parish visiting, preparing sermons, informing non-Catholics, practicing obedience, and other matters pertaining to the priest's vocation are treated with insight. The priest is reminded that the light of grace which comes to his parishioners through him must not be clouded or impeded by culpable personal defects. He is told that there is a two-fold reason for him to be well-read and well-prepared for his duties: not only will this enable him to instruct and care for his spiritual children more effectively, but it will increase his own wisdom and maturity.

These thought-provoking and inspiring sermons on the responsibilities, joys and trials of the priestly vocation will be of interest to all priests. Each conference is of convenient length to fit into a busy schedule, but the message it carries will endure for time to come.

(From the flap-blurb)

THE MASS – A LITURGICAL COMMENTARY, Vol. II: The Mass of faithful, *by Canon A. Croegaert, translated by J. Holland Smith. The Newman Press.* 311 *pp.* $4.75

This second volume of Canon Croegaert's excellent study of the Roman Mass covers the Mass of the Faithful from the Offertory to the final prayers of thanksgiving. As with the earlier volume, each ceremony has a chapter to itself, and is there described under its historical, doctrinal, liturgical, and theological aspects. Recent reforms and modifications of the rite are carefully considered; the expert translation by J. Holland Smith takes full acount of the revised order of Holy Week announced by the general decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Maxima Redemptionis Nostrae Mysteria*, and also of the 1952 edition of the *Rituale Romanum.*

The whole work is an invaluable guide to the complexities of the venerable tradition of Catholic worship, and preserves a balance between a scholarly treatment of liturgical history and an invitation to enter more deeply into the spiritual meaning and riches of the Mass.

(London, *Times Literary Supplement*)

THE QUEST FOR GOD, *by Dom I. Ryelandt, O.S.B.; translated by Dom Matthew Dillion, O.S.B. B. Herder Book Co.*, 207 *pp.* $3.25.

This study in Benedictine Spirituality is an able application of the principles of the Rule of St. Benedict to the problems presented by life in the world at the present day. The author tells us that this book is supplementary to the works of Dom Marmion. It is in fact a new presentation of the same great principles of the spiritual life expounded so admirably by Dom Marmion.

The book is divided into three sections. In the first, which is called *Fundamentals,* Dom Ryelandt has stressed the primary importance of God in all human existence. This vital truth is treated in 6 chapters. The five following chapters deal with the second part, called *Piety,* in which the author present the importance of the Liturgical framework of the Mass and of the spirit of prayer – especially the prayer of thanksgiving and of praise. Under the heading *Fidelity,* the third part treats with attachment to the divine will, the desire to progress in the spiritual life, interior joy of the faith and the final goal of the Christian's quest for God, the only true God, the Holy Triniity, whose wondrous riches and mysteries were revealed to us by our Lord.

John Auricchio, S.S.P.

BRIDE – THIEF OF THE HOLOCAUST, *by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles Doyle. The Bruce Pub. Co.* 209 *pp.* $3.75

For Religious and Priests who desire good spiritual reading for use during and between retreats, Msgr. Doyle in this work has written sensible conferences on the fundamental virtues allied to humility, purity and love of God, the many sins that arise from pride, and the truly destructive effects this most subtle vice brings in the spiritual life. Since there will be no real or lasting progress in the spiritual life without humility, the author devotes a chapter to various steps leading to the acquisition of this virtue. The various degrees of chastity and of love of God that may be attained are competently explained; and the reader is given aids for the attempt to attain a better foundation of a more perfect possession of these priceless Christian virtues.

Msgr. Doyle in this work combines the use of theology, of Scripture, and illustrative inci-

dents in the lives of the Saints, experts in the divine art of Christian perfection. Finally, his comments aim to arouse a more vivid desire in the heart of those consecrated to God to become more perfect and Christlike.

John Auricchio, S.S.P.

LITURGICAL PRAYER, *by Conrad Pepler, O.P.B. Herder Book Co.* 148 *pp.* $2.75.

The essays in this volume are intended as an introduction to the subject of Sacramental Prayer. The subject is a vast one, which for some reason has not received the attention it deserves. There have been many books and articles written on Liturgical Prayer, but nearly always in a departmentalised spirit, contradictiing at least implicity, this form of prayer with private prayers and devotions. But evidently the Sacraments, since they are the main channels of grace, must also be the foundations of all prayer whether liturgical or private. Prayer is not a one sided activity of the Christian trying to approach God, but a mutual intercourse between these two, and the first mover in this interaction must always be God.

(from the *Preface*)

FAITHFUL SERVANT translated *by William J. Young, S.J., B. Herder Co.,* 450 *pp.* $6.50

FAITHFUL SERVANT gives a refreshing insight into the mind and methods of a great director of souls — Blessed Claude La Columbiere.

Sometimes it would seem that direction is treated almost as a thing of the past or as something relegated to the fervor of novitiate and seminary days. Yet reading the writings of La Columbiere the reader gathers that direction should be or could be a more commonplace thing (even for the laity) in our modern age.

This book also gives a glimpse behind the outward events of the life of La Columbiere. The workings of his soul are bared to the reader in the notes of his retreats. These notes and 148 letters to his spiritual children map a route to the summit of perfection.

In his great work of directing souls La Columbiere was not deluded, nor did he try to deceive others who asked his spiritual advice. His search for perfection is chiefly the work of the Holy Spirit.

T. A. Chenevey, S.S.P.